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## The Pleasures of the Table

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SMALL *Oxford* BOOKS

THE  
PLEASURES  
OF THE  
TABLE

COMPILED BY  
THEODORA FITZGIBBON



SMALL *Oxford* BOOKS



# THE PLEASURES OF THE TABLE



*Compiled by*  
THEODORA FITZGIBBON

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
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For my dear friend  
John Tovey  
who has given me so many  
'pleasures of the table'

Printed in Great Britain by  
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
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## *Introduction*

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Of all the arts the culinary is perhaps the most ancient, and it is clear that, from earliest times, it has been of great importance to mankind, not merely as an aid to nutrition, but as a means of self-expression and creative endeavour. Over the millennia, it has exercised the imaginations of kings and commoners, prelates and poets, as well as philosophers and people who simply want to make their everyday lives more interesting by tasting a new food or drink.

There are few things more rewarding than food, and the pleasure is available to many, for good food does not necessarily mean expensive food. It is enjoyed by all nationalities and it is interesting to note that a feast is often the prelude to difficult negotiations between one country and another. Food is considered the essential part of a special occasion such as a wedding or an anniversary.

Food as such is, however, not enough. It must be well prepared, suitable to the occasion, and the atmosphere and the company must be in harmony. This is truly the pleasure of the table: a repast prepared with affection, if not with love.

It is for this reason that I am more concerned in this book with the harmony of eating, rather than eating itself, for the latter is common to all living creatures, and depends largely on hunger. The true pleasure is the personal choice, into which the care, knowledge, and imagination of the host or hostess plays a very large part. We have all experienced the rich glow of satisfaction after a meal spent in pleasant company,

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